Oklahoma City Thunder
Media Conference

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Ajay Mitchell

Press Conference

Q. There's a lot of outside expectations and excitement around the type of season that you could have this year. What is your approach to that? Is that exciting for you to hear? Do you shut it out? How do you handle that?

AJAY MITCHELL: I mean, yeah, it's exciting. Doesn't really change the way I look at things. My focus has always been how can I help this team win, and this year is the same thing. So try to approach it the same way. Try to find ways to help make this team better. Just really excited to be here and get started again.

Q. I think Sam had said during his availability that this is a team that is going to have to embrace change and not fall victim to try to imitate previous play styles. As you look at pieces around this roster, what excites you about the different possibilities with this group?

AJAY MITCHELL: I mean, a lot of different things. I think we have a great team, a complete team, and just excited to see how we start and how the season goes.

But obviously we have high expectations, and we have a lot of competitors, which is really exciting.

Q. Do you care if you start or come off the bench?

AJAY MITCHELL: Not at all. Like I said, my focus is to help this team win, and I just want us to be the best team we can be. So doesn't really matter, starter, coming off the bench, I don't really care.

Q. Last year you said there was so much you could work on. What did you focus on this off-season in terms of improvement?

AJAY MITCHELL: A little bit of everything. Work on my weaknesses. Work on my strength, and then trying to become the best player I can become. I try to not set a ceiling on my game and try to be the best version of myself. But it has to come within the team and being able to compete and produce for this team and help us be the best team we can be.

Q. What's it been like so far just being the UC Santa Barbara GM and your impressions of that?

AJAY MITCHELL: Thanks for that question. Santa Barbara is a place that means a lot to me, and I'm just really excited to be able to give back. They believed in me for three years and made me the man I am today. It just felt natural for me to help in any way I could, and really excited to be able to mentor the players, help with recruiting and just help this program grow.

Q. Related to that, have you asked Sam for any advice or tips?

AJAY MITCHELL: Not yet, but that's a conversation I'll definitely have with him.

Q. Just saw a tweet about Thunder maybe having a Belgian waffle stand in Paycom. Did you have anything to do with that?

AJAY MITCHELL: I wonder who wanted Belgian waffles.

Q. What do you think is some Belgian food that needs to hit the mainstream in the U.S.?

AJAY MITCHELL: So let's set the record straight here. French fries are from Belgium. So they should be called Belgian fries. So we're going to start doing that. Belgian fries in Paycom would be cool, too. I think waffles has to be, too, just because I don't think -- no disrespect. I've had a lot of American waffles, and they are really good with the syrup, though. But in Belgium, you can have a waffle without anything, and it's the best thing that you'll ever have. I want you guys to be able to experience that.

Q. Can you tell us more about the GM role, like what does that look like? How much time are you able to dedicate to it and things along those lines?

AJAY MITCHELL: To be honest, when we were first starting to figure something out on how I could help -- like the only thing I wanted to do was help the school in any way I could.

Believe it or not, we still have a lot of free time as NBA

players, and it's easy for me to be able to balance that. Obviously my main focus is playing basketball, being on this team and helping my team win.

But anything I can do extra is what I want to do, and so it's having conversation with coaches, having conversation with the AD, and just being able to help them in any way I can.

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